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Author

Title

Imprint



HISTORY AND DESCRIPTION

— OF THE —

NATIONAL BANK

— OF —

KNOWLEDGE.

—

BEING A SYSTEM OF MERITS AND QUESTIONS COMBINED,
FOR GENERAL AND PRACTICAL
USE IN SCHOOLS

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**FULL AND EXPLICIT INSTRUCTIONS
FOR USING.**

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— BY —

R. W. McKEE, Baldwin, Pa.

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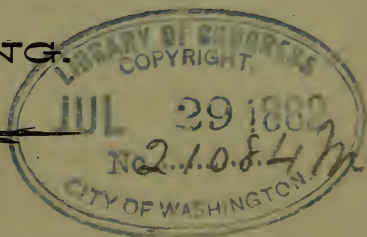
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MATCHETT & Co., PRINTERS, 78 and 80 WOOD ST., PITTSBURGH, PA.

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DEDICATED

—{ TO THE }—

TEACHERS AND PUPILS

—OF THE—

UNITED STATES.

Entered According to Act of Congress in the year 1881, by R. W.
McKEE, in the office of the Librarian of Congress at Washington.

NOTA BENE.

It will not take you long to read this small book CAREFULLY from beginning to end. Any suggestions for the improvement of this system, any criticisms communicated in a friendly spirit, or any questions that may be of general interest, and suitable and useful for it, will be thankfully received from any one.

Address the Author.

HISTORY AND DESCRIPTION.

The idea of utilizing the reverse, or *white* side of Merit Tickets with a useful question or direction was derived from the experience of the author as a teacher, and while he was Principal of the Public Schools of Saltsburg, Pa. The idea of different denominations of Merit Tickets, as developed in this system, was derived from the author's experience as a banker. His brief, but very successful use, in that school, of the system while yet in a very crude state, has prompted his giving it to his fellow teachers in this improved form, and ready for use, with the hope that it shall be to them and their pupils, what its name purports — A NATIONAL BANK OF KNOWLEDGE, from which they can continually draw funds that will cause them to increase their capital stock in the great business of Education. The system consists of eight denominations of nicely engraved Merit Cards or Tickets, printed in as many different colors, and sufficient in number for the wants of any ordinary school. The denominations are similar to that of the subsidiary coinage of the United States. As now published, there are sixteen hundred tickets of different denominations in proportion as set forth below:

Denomination of One Merit.....	256	Rose.
“ “ Two Merits	224	Blue.
“ “ Three Merits.....	224	Buff.
“ “ Five Merits.....	128	Yellow.
“ “ Ten Merits.....	224	Green.
“ “ Twenty-five Merits	128	Salmon.
“ “ Fifty Merits.....	128	Drab,
“ “ One Hundred Merits	288	Fawn.

These sixteen hundred tickets are capable of supplying any school with over forty-three thousand Merits. The number of tickets may be increased in future editions, if found necessary. It is put up for sale in a neat box containing eight divisions—a place for each denomination—and therefore ready for use at once. Although primarily intended for use in schools, it could be used in family instruction as well.

DIRECTIONS FOR USING.

The method of using this system, as well as that of any other, should be upon the principle of “whatever is worth doing at all, is worth doing well.” For the benefit of those desiring to use it in the same manner as used by the author, and as intended to be used, these directions and suggestions are here inserted.

It was used as a *general* exercise immediately after the opening of the morning session, and the same way at the opening of the session in the afternoon. In this way, it made two general exercises each day, in which every scholar in school individually took part, and the time occupied was hardly ever more than ten minutes at each exercise. It might also be used as a *class* exercise, at the close of a regular recitation, to give variety, which is the spice of life, and most especially of *school* life. As a preparatory measure, and for the better preservation of the tickets, each pupil was required to have a good strong envelope, with his name plainly written upon it. Perhaps the better plan, owing to the small cost at which it could be done, and for the sake of uniformity, would be for the teacher to furnish each of his pupils with the envelope. The BASIS upon which the Merits were given out was that

each pupil present at roll-call—that is, not tardy—was entitled to ONE MERIT as pay for that forenoon. So absence for one half day, or tardiness was punished by the forfeiture of their wages—one merit. And, as the great bane of our schools is irregular attendance, if the system of paying the pupils wages in this way, will have a tendency to break up this evil alone, leaving every other benefit derived from it out of the question, it will have accomplished a purpose more valuable than many times its cost.

At the appointed time, proper quietness and attention was required and the box was passed to each pupil in the school-room by the teacher, or some pupil designated by him. If the teacher thinks best, he might pass the box at all times himself, but my method was to have it passed by each pupil in turn, as seated in the school-room, or as their names stood upon the roll, so that each pupil would know when his turn came, and absence or tardiness forfeited that privilege also. But whoever passes the box should pay particular attention, and correct any errors that might be noticed, such as putting Merit Tickets in the wrong division, or taking out the wrong denomination, or any errors of that nature. Of course, the first time the box or “bank” passes around, each pupil would simply take a one Merit Ticket out of its proper apartment or division, as each denomination has a separate space allotted to it.

Great care should be taken to have each denomination always in its proper place or division, as only upon this ground can the *Merit* part of the system be carried along correctly, but as the denominations are printed in different colors, this will not be a difficult matter

The second time the box was passed around, would be nearly similar

to the first, as each pupil present would put his one Merit Ticket back into its proper place and take out a two Merit Ticket. And so, the third time, when each pupil present would put his two Merit Ticket back, and take out a three Merit Ticket. But, very soon, from absence and tardiness and new admissions, this sameness will change, and each pupil, being required to keep his own count, should know exactly what he has to do when the box comes to him, and be prepared to act promptly.

When a pupil has a three Merit Ticket, he only has to retain that, and take out a one Merit Ticket, and the next time it comes to him, he should put in both his one Merit and three Merit Tickets, and take out a five Merit Ticket. With a five Merit Ticket in his possession, it would only be necessary to go through the same routine that has been explained, until his stock of Merits would be increased to nine, then all tickets in his possession would be put back into their respective divisions, and a ten Merit Ticket taken out. So when the pupil had obtained twenty-four merits, all his tickets would be put back into the box, and a twenty-five Merit Ticket taken out, and so on, constantly increasing his stock by one merit for each half-day's punctual attendance. A pupil will often put back several tickets, but should never take out more than one. The method of making change here laid down, might be slightly modified or changed, but the idea aimed at is to have the total number of merits held by each pupil represented by as few Merit Tickets as possible. On the basis set forth, the teacher's account of attendance should tally with the number of merits held by the pupil, if no other account is kept, but I would advise keeping a merit account. Once each month at its close would be often enough for

the teacher to settle with the pupils to see how the accounts agreed.

Accuracy in counting and making change is certainly taught here, if carefully looked after by the teacher

Pupils were required to take the best possible care of their tickets and were not allowed to write on them, double, tear or soil them in any way beyond the necessary wear and tear of ordinary use. In this was the habit of *carefulness* taught.

Being *excused* for absence or tardiness did not entitle the pupil to a merit for that particular case. However, each teacher should regulate this to suit himself. Certain rules should be adopted by the teacher in starting the use of this system in regard to what entitled pupils to a merit, and strictly adhered to throughout *one* term at least, and all should be treated alike in this regard, *without respect to age, sex, color or previous condition of servitude.*

This is so far as the *Merit* side of the tickets is concerned, but now, the other important part of the system—the idea of utilizing the reverse side of the Merit Tickets by having printed thereon, a useful general question or direction—is also brought into use, and this will no doubt soon prove to be the most interesting part of the exercise. Of course in primary schools, this part would have to be dispensed with altogether, and in ungraded schools in the country, those pupils who could not read could be passed over so far as this part of the exercise was concerned.

Each pupil, as soon as he gets his Merit Ticket, and sees that it is of the right denomination, can read and study whatever may be on the reverse side, until the box returns to the teacher's desk, and then immediately the pupil to whom the box was first passed, rises in his place

and reads the question or whatever may be on his ticket, and if he can do so, answers it as briefly and correctly as possible. The next one does in the same manner, and so on until all have done so. In case the ticket would direct the pupil to do something, either on the slate, black-board, or writing of any kind on paper, he should go to work promptly, and have it done by the time it came his turn to answer, and then, if required, read his answer. In case a pupil could not answer or do the requirements of his Merit Ticket, he should be immediately seated after reading it.

No penalty was attached to a failure to answer the questions, or comply with the directions, but it should be the aim and pride of each pupil to answer all that he may get, either at the given time, or at some future day. It would be a good idea for each pupil to keep a list of all questions or directions, that he may draw during the term, and record *his* answers in a small pass book kept for that purpose. He might use one page for questions, and the opposite one for answers, and at the end of the term, unconsciously, he would have written a book. Pupils may sometimes happen to get the same ticket they have had at some previous time, but this will occur so very seldom as not to hurt. Teachers need not put all their *Capital Stock* of tickets in the bank at one time, but keep out a *Reserve Fund*, and add to the Capital, as occasion demanded, or they might mix up each denomination occasionally so as to avoid the same Merit Ticket coming out too often in succession.

The system does not furnish answers to the questions, but leaves each free to give an answer in his own words, or perform the direction in his own way, but it would certainly be the duty of the teacher to see

that all would be done in the best possible manner, according to the ability of the pupil. Any unanswered questions may be called up afterward, before closing the exercise, or the next day, and an opportunity given any pupil of school to answer. This at times would be eminently proper, but in my opinion, it is better not to make it too general, but to make each one feel that it is a special exercise for him, and that they should act accordingly, and put forth every effort within themselves, so as not to have too many failures on their part. In support of this, I will here venture to say that the pupil who draws a question and fails to answer it at the time, will be apt to look it up, or ask about it at home, while the same question might be asked him by the teacher with the same failure to answer, and he would never think about it afterward.

The teacher should never volunteer to give their pupils answers, until after proper and diligent research and inquiry had been made by them. It would be entirely proper for him to refer them to some person or book where the proper information might be obtained, in case the pupil had failed to find any information about the particular question. When a pupil leaves school by moving from the vicinity, or for a permanent absence, his tickets should be returned to the bank.

At the close of the school term, the Merit Tickets should all be returned to the bank, and the number of merits obtained by each pupil properly recorded, and the business of the bank closed. If the teacher after using this system, discovers some better method, he should certainly use it in preference to following these instructions, but, as these are based upon actual trial and experience, they should be worthy of careful consideration, at least, if not to an exact trial.

And now, as the great demand of the age is "thin" text books, and greatly appreciating that grand idea, I submit this "thin" book, with its accompanying system of *School Money* to the educational and teaching fraternity of the United States, and, by the friendly aid of the greatest power in the land, send it forth for trial at your hands, and trust that your verdict will not be, that it is "too thin."



The following letter of recommendation from Prof. R. O. Waldron, for three years Principal of the Public Schools of Baldwin, Pa., speaks for itself:

BREAKNECK, PA., April 20th, 1882.

To whom it may concern:

Before its publication, I used the model of the "National Bank of Knowledge," in the Baldwin Public Schools during the last term of six months. Some of the advantages and benefits demonstrated by its use, as set forth in the instructions of the author, are as follows:—

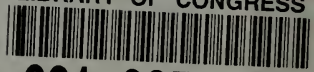
- 1st. It secured regular and punctual attendance.
- 2nd. It taught pupils to think for themselves, and to give original and clear expression to their thought.
- 3rd. It greatly sharpened their observations.
- 4th. It put new life into the dull pupils.
- 5th. It caused the pupils to work at home, and consequently the parents became interested.
- 6th. It stimulated the pupils to read useful books, and search after useful information, and to remember it.

As a General Exercise, it is unsurpassed, as it is always new. The questions are on such a variety of subjects, that it can never become monotonous. It certainly deserves to come into general use in all our schools, and I commend it to every teacher as worth more than its cost.

R. O. WALDRON.



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